

Introduction

Rationale



During a disaster, States must be responsive to local jurisdictions and must effectively acquire and distribute Federal resources. State disaster management is complex, requiring that State staff members have accurate information on the Federal programs available and work with Federal counterparts in the management of those programs.

As a State Coordinating Officer (SCO) you play a critical role in managing the response and recovery operations. Other State staff that have vital roles include Operations Officers, Individual Assistance (IA) Officers, Public Assistance (PA) Officers, Hazard Mitigation Officers (HMO), Community Relations Managers, and Public Information Officers.

Purpose

This independent study course provides you with fundamental information on the disaster assistance process and disaster assistance programs. When all the participants have the same base of program knowledge, the SCO course can focus on management skills and issues for the SCO.

Individuals who serve as SCOs are encouraged to attend the FEMA State Coordinating Officer Course (E208). You must complete this independent study course before attending the resident course.

Objectives

After completing this course, you should be able to:

1. Develop pre-disaster plans for joint State and Federal disaster response and recovery operations.
2. Produce accurate and complete declaration packages according to current requirements.
3. Discuss Federal disaster assistance programs, listing the mission, management, and funding for each.
4. Identify the disaster management partners needed to conduct a comprehensive emergency management program.
5. Discuss the characteristics of a good, comprehensive emergency management partnership, including its establishment and maintenance.

Course Overview

You will meet the objectives of this course by completing 12 units of instruction and the introductory and concluding units.

The units of instruction are:

Introduction

Unit 1 Disaster Management Roles and Responsibilities

Unit 2 Pre-Disaster Planning

Unit 3 Disaster Sequence of Events

Unit 4 Damage Assessment

Unit 5 The Declaration Process

Unit 6 Financial and Administrative Requirements

Unit 7 Individual Assistance

Unit 8 Public Assistance

Unit 9 Hazard Mitigation

Unit 10 Other Disaster Assistance

Unit 11 Miscellaneous Sources of Information

Unit 12 Recovery Issues

Conclusion

What Does it All Mean?

The units of instruction listed on the previous page include general information on the topics listed. You will use this information at *different times for different reasons*:

1. Now – to gain background knowledge on the topics
2. In the classroom SCO course – as reference material
3. During disaster response – to remember key information and to apply the checklists to your actions

Each unit of instruction has an appendix with sample materials or supplemental materials for you to use as aids to your job in disaster management. The samples include letters you would send in the course of your duties, agreements between FEMA and the State, and forms that you might use.

You can use the job aids in this book to review State plans and procedures and to compare your procedures with what others have used successfully during disasters. Or, you can modify the job aids so they meet your State-specific needs.

Completing This Course

You should take this course at your own pace. You will remember the material best if you do not rush through it. You will spend more time on units that contain a lot of information that is new to you, perhaps as much as an hour on some units. You will probably be able to complete the entire course in about 8 hours.

This course is programmed study. You can tailor the course so that it matches your level of knowledge on the topics covered. Each unit begins with a few Portal Questions. If you answer these questions correctly, you have the option of skipping that unit of instruction. You may want to read the unit anyway to build your knowledge base. Learning checks are located throughout the units to reinforce the key points.

Take time to study the material in each unit and make note of questions or comments in the blank space next to the text. Your State agency will have people

who specialize in the various programs, and you can turn to them for additional information. During some units, you will be directed to ask them about State-specific policies and issues.

Take a break after each unit to give yourself time to think about the material. Then take the learning check at the end of the unit. After you check your answers, return to the text to review material you missed.

The final exam will test the knowledge you have gained from the course. The test is at the end of this course booklet. Fill out the answer sheet supplied, and return it to the EMI Independent Study Program Office. Your test will be evaluated and the results will be mailed to you within a few weeks. If you score 75 percent or higher, you will receive a certificate of completion.

Make inquiries on the test results in writing to:

EMI Independent Study Program
16825 South Seton Avenue
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

Or by e-mail to: independent.study@fema.gov

References

FEMA Program Offices supplied reference materials used to assemble this course. You will find specific references in each unit and a Webliography at the end of the course

Your State Emergency Management Agency Program Offices can provide you with additional information on the State policies and practices related to the implementation of the Federal programs. Consult those offices for State-specific questions.